

**Mexico, 15th April 1976**

## **Opening of the 40th AIPS Congress**



*The 40th Congress of the Association Internationale de la Presse Sportive was held in Mexico from 15th to 18th April. Excellently organised by the Mexican Sports Press Association under the direction of Mr. Antonio Mora Hurtado, this Congress—the first to be held outside Europe—was chaired by Mr. Frank Taylor, President of the AIPS, assisted by Mrs. Pat Besford, President of the AIPS Swimming Commission.*

*We are publishing below the speech given at this Congress by Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee and Chairman of its Press Commission.*

*Messrs. Istvan Szombathy (Hungary), Nikolai Kisselev (USSR), Antoine Herbauts (Belgium), Maurice Vidal (France), Jörg Stokinger (Germany), José Maria Lorente (Spain), all members of the AIPS board, were present at the opening of this congress. Mr. Mauro Jimenez Lazcano represented H.E. Luis Echeverria, President of the Republic of the United States of Mexico. Dr. Eduardo Hay, IOC member for Mexico, and Mr. Mario Vazquez Raña, President of the Pan-American Sports Organisation and the Mexican Olympic Committee, also took their places on the rostrum.*

*The celebration of the next Olympiad was one of the principal subjects of discussion. Mr. Louis Chantigny, a senior official of the Montreal Organising Committee and recently appointed press officer, drew up the complete balance sheet of the press services. On the way back the members of the AIPS board, accompanied by several delegates to the Congress, went to Montreal where they visited the new press centre on 22nd April.*

**Address by  
Mr. J. A. Samaranch  
Vice-President of the IOC**



To leave the Old Continent and reach these enchanting American shores with the flag of sports as sole passport is to be assured of that affectionate and cordial welcome to the premier Spanish-speaking country with which you all greet your guests from every continent.

That passport of mine also contains a highly respected visa given me by you, the sportswriters from all over the world, to come and address your important annual Congress being held in a city boasting as fine sporting credentials as does the capital of Mexico.

People coming from Europe are always loaded with stories, anecdotes and personal experiences which we often believe are our exclusive copyright. But as we get to know this wonderful American continent better, we observe more clearly how much we need your mature experience and how valuable are the examples and lessons you give to us Europeans as you advance in seven-league boots along the splendid tracks of modern sports.

While north of the Rio Grande sports techniques, competitive achievements and the high standard of your athletes have come to a point which is hard to beat, it should not be forgotten that all the technical progress achieved in the past century by America's universities, clubs and athletes will avail but little if it is not based on human values and on that sporting spirit which prevails in the 32 countries in the centre and the south of the most promising continent of the planet.

The future of world sports is firmly rooted in the American continent. No other part of the world today can draw on as full and scientific a source of technique and experience as can this continent. At the same time nowhere else in world sports can one find human reserves with such possibilities as among the variety of races, mentalities, peoples and dreams as exist in America. And all that is capped by a real and living feeling of a sporting community, which emerges constantly whenever sporting events bring the different peoples of the Americas together.

I state this with particular satisfaction in the certainty that you understand me, all of you seated at this gathering, because you are not all members of that important newspaper profession in vain. When the A.I.P.S. through its President, my friend Taylor, invited me to attend in my dual capacity of Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee and Chairman of its Press Commission, I felt greatly honoured and gratified to accept. For anyone who knows me is aware of the respect and admiration I have always entertained for the sporting press, not only for the high degree of specialization and sensitivity it requires, but also for the deep humanity and professional sense displayed by sports writers at all times.

If any profession requires being constantly up to date it is indeed yours. What was true yesterday may not be so today, while tomorrow it may not be so certain. The stream of records, triumphs and new factors in sports means that sportswriters have constantly to be up dating their knowledge of facts and techniques, which they can only do if they bring love and devotion to their work.

All this is why I am grateful to your President, Frank Taylor, for extending me the

privilege of being with you at your intimate annual gathering.

I also wish to thank our host, the "Organizing Committee of the Journalists' Conference", for their lavish and warm welcome to Mexico City, so rich in history and beauty as well as in important events in the history of Olympic sports in all their facets.

Speaking as representative of the Olympic spirit, I shall not insult you by going through the history and ethics of what we stand for: you all know it perfectly. Nor shall I insist on the countless links established over almost nine decades between the Olympic spirit and the press. That relationship has always been one of the main reasons for the constant progress of the Olympic movement.

You represent a vast section of the press. Your means of expression and dissemination are a canvas whose surface grows with the Games. Books and periodicals, all kind of magazines and revues, radio and television, films and documentaries... all these form a tremendous sounding board for the achievements and doctrine of the International Olympic Committee.

Undoubtedly you constitute a multitude of schools with enormously different objectives. But we know the risks of single scores. It is precisely that diversity that rendered signal services to the Olympic spirit, saving it from resting on its laurels and forever stimulating it to keep up to date.

The IOC has for years paid careful heed to suggestions from the press. This may surprise some of you, but you only need to think back a little and you will realize that what I say is true.

I am convinced in all good faith that it will be more and more recognized that the International Olympic Committee is the reverse of a closed shop. It is easy to pinpoint the elements of appraisal and, I venture to say, the sources of creativity at our disposal.

In the first place, we cannot forget the debates and constant exchange of ideas which make the IOC a forum of 76 deeply united members, united across national



*AIPS best sports photograph competition:  
This picture by Tony Duffy (Great Britain) won the 1st prize in the "colour" section.*

borders and systems in one faith constantly fighting for the Olympic spirit.

Next (not in any order of importance but merely lining up my subjects to end up with yourselves) come two bodies with which the IOC is all the time in daily close contact. I refer to the National Olympic Committees—let me remind you that each IOC member is thereby member of his own NOC—and to the International Federations on which the IOC is also well represented.

Third source of our creativity: all sportsmen throughout the world who are in contact with us individually or through the many appropriate organs.

Fourth source, and not the least important: the many commissions set up by the IOC; their fields of action, their numbers and their tasks are constantly growing. They are assisted by the best-known tech-

nicians who provide knowledge and advice. Finally allow me to mention the star which constantly lights our way: yourselves, ladies and gentlemen, the press and the media, the global giant of the fifth power, the press.

Your influence is fascinating and tremendous. The general press tries to incorporate in its articles the reactions and feelings of the public, often adding its own comments, suggestions and criticisms. Later it is all read, observed and digested by thousands of millions of readers and listeners, whose opinions about the problem or the spectacle are gradually thereby formed. Thereafter their reactions will influence not only the press but the conception which gave birth to the novelty or the spectacle.

This unending interchange enables an idea or an ideal to be spread almost instantaneously across the five continents.

To avoid this having negative results, those of us who share in this need for sports have to be jointly aware of our problems and our concrete aims. This requires mutual respect, even when contradictions arise.

The common aim for which we are gathered today is to foster the interests of sports in harmony. I personally cannot conceive of anyone being a sportswriter unless he loves sport.

Obviously we have to take our various sports ethics into consideration. As far as the IOC is concerned, we took our decision from the beginning. That decision was irreversible. The size of the Olympic movement, its spread and its conditions of life had unavoidably to be altered as they grew out of the foundations laid by Pierre de Coubertin, the Renovator. But the Olympic ideal remains intact and we and our successors shall continue to safeguard it.

I feel you must understand our care for its development, and, at the same time, our duty to be faithful to a shining standard of ethics, the importance, youthfulness and everlasting qualities of which outlive us. Anyone who loves sport and undertakes to stand up for it must, in my opinion, uphold the Olympic standards and follow the action of those who maintain those standards in a constructive spirit. Among the many servants of the Olympic spirit, allow me to salute two of the IOC members in Mexico the architect Pedro Ramirez Vásquez and Dr. Eduardo Hay.

Yes. The Olympic spirit is dynamic. It is continuously evolving while yet always remaining faithful to itself. The balance is difficult, sometimes acrobatic, but it is vitally necessary.

Is it not true that the Regional Games are an example of potential and encouraging growth? I obviously think of that because we are in Mexico which for the second time organized the Pan-American Games last October with great success, thanks to the Mexican Olympic Committee and our friend Don Mario Vásquez Raña, who is also President of the Pan-American Sports Organization.

It was a remarkable achievement. It is tremendously difficult to take over from

another city which was to have organized them but had to withdraw only ten months before they were due to start.

The standards of the last Pan-American Games and their popular success throughout the continent again showed that in their intrinsic interest the Regional Games are fundamentally useful and of great value to the Olympic Games. Can we indeed not imagine that the day may come when widely extended Regional Games may serve to provide the final selections for the Olympic Games? That would enhance still further the splendor of the irreplaceable team city and uphold its unique quality of universality.

These are the thoughts I wanted to share with you. I am aware that in the course of your duties you will be concerned with many other problems. One of them is urgent: the Montreal Olympic Games. You are well aware that the IOC, through its Press Commission, of which your President Mr. Taylor is a member, has been and still is fighting for adequate working conditions there for the press. The Press Commission, of which I am President, and the AIPS must by joint and firm action get the COJO to take the necessary steps to ensure that the media, that essential sector, are in a position to put their enormous powers of dissemination and their extraordinary influence on all sportsmen at the service of the Games.

We hope that the progress of your discussions will match the cordiality and kindness of Mexican hospitality, and that the reports you receive from the various Organising Committees will fulfil your hopes or calm your fears.

I have no need to emphasise that the IOC Press Commission, the Director and myself are always available to discuss with you any problems that will undoubtedly arise.

J. A. S.

